SOCRATES

OR THE EMANCIPATION OF MANKIND

H. F. CARLILL

727

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TO-DAY AND TO-MORROW

For the Contents of this Series see the end of the Book

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The Emancipation of Mankind

BY

H. F. CARLILL

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The Emancipation of Mankind

The Socratic Standpoint

In the spring of the year 399 B.C. a strange thing happened. The Athenians, the most intelligent of human communities, put to death their most remarkable teacher, Socrates, on the charge—which in its literal sense no one can seriously have believed—that he corrupted young men and introduced new gods.

So singular a perversion of justice has puzzled the world ever since. When did even a democracy—even a Greek democracy just recovering from a series of revolutions—think it worth while to kill an elderly and blameless philosopher (he

was over seventy years old and a man of irreproachable virtue) whose only ostensible crime was a habit of asking awkward questions? It is true that the large number of young men who had felt at one time or another the peculiar personal fascination for which he was famous included Critias and Alcibiades, who had helped to ruin the city. It is true also that he had an inward voice, a familiar spirit which told him at certain crises in his life what not to do. But it is perfectly certain that his moral teaching was sound, if not indeed sublime, and that not only did he not introduce new gods, but that the Athenians would not have cared in the least if he had. For all the attempts that have been made in later centuries to explain it, the thing remains on the face of it an outrage on commonsense. And yet it is safe to say that the Athenians did not kill Socrates without some good reason, even if they were unable to explain it to themselves;

and it is worth while trying to make clear what that reason was.

Socrates was a portent, one of the greatest men who ever lived, and also one of the most dangerous. Everyone knows what he was like—a strong, ugly man, with great powers of endurance, immense self-control, and an intellect like a razor. He had the typical Greek spirit of disinterested curiosity in its most complete form, and, after dabbling in science and philosophy, he seems to have concentrated his mind on the problem of analysing and systematizing the conduct of that singular creature, man.

He made it his business in life to compel people to clear up their ideas, and to satisfy themselves that anything they proposed to do was done with a full consciousness of the end they had in view and the means by which they proposed to attain it. His method was simple. He disclaimed all special knowledge, and professed

merely to deliver people of the ideas stirring in their minds by asking a series of questions—which, however, generally had the result of revealing to his victims that they had only the vaguest notion of what they were aiming at, and that, so far as it could be formulated at all, it was clearly inconsistent with several other notions that they believed themselves to entertain. He was not primarily a philosopher, being much more interested in life than in ideas, though incidentally, by distinguishing for the first time (if we are to believe Prof. Burnet[1]) the soul from the body and by insisting on the clear definition of general ideas he originated the whole of what we know to-day as Philosophy.

All he asked was that people should realize what they were about and why —that they should ' know themselves '. Nothing more. But that in itself was

[1] *The Socratic Doctrine of the Soul.* (*Proc. Brit. Acad.* 1915-6).

a revolution. It required one to cross-examine oneself in a spirit of dispassionate inquiry—in a word to be self-conscious, to take nothing on trust, think nothing by habit, believe nothing by tradition, do nothing on impulse; and, as nine-tenths or ninety-nine hundredths even of the Athenians in the fifth century before Christ acted and thought by habit, tradition, and impulse every minute of their waking lives, the effect was devastating.

The Athenians saw their familiar comfortable world of custom and compromise, of instinct and tradition, of half-beliefs and shibboleths—the sort of world that each of us lives in and loves—dissolving before their very eyes. If nothing was to be taken for granted, nothing accepted without inquiry, if all ideals were to be examined and discussed, if one's notions of justice, virtue, piety were to be analysed and compared in the same way and with the same single-minded desire to arrive

at truth and consistency as the best method of building houses or training horses, what was to be the end of it all? It was as if the solid ground were shifting under their feet. Finally, in desperation—not because at his age he could do much more harm, but by way of protest against his whole attitude of mind—they made him drink hemlock.

Now the Socratic point of view was the highest and most characteristic development of the Greek genius, its legitimate and predestined consummation. That sleepless curiosity, that naïve and candid way of looking at everything with the brain of a man behind the eyes of a child, was never more clearly seen than when it was turned on human nature. It seems a simple thing to ask a man to analyse his motives, to make sure that his ideas of what he wants to do and why are clear and consistent. But the effect on minds with no great experience of life and no wide knowledge of history

and science is not unlikely to be disastrous. In a sense the Socratic doctrine was the suicide of the Greek genius. Among the many causes that have been suggested to account for the swift fading of that amazing flower, this at any rate deserves a place. No doubt there was an immense aftermath of brilliant talent, but the Athens of the fifth century became a memory. The freshness, the naïveté, the superb confidence and unerring accomplishment were gone. After Socrates there is only the lonely spirit of Plato and the scarcely human intellect of Aristotle.[1]

The Unconscious

What, therefore, one may call

[1] Nietzsche understood Socrates only too well, as an instrument of the Greek decline, as 'pseudo-greek, antigreek': his dialectic, which was to save men from degeneration was itself a symptom: to control the instincts, 'that is the formula for decadence.' The whole section of *Götzendämmerung* devoted to him is full of perverted insight.

humanity's first essay in self-consciousness was not altogether a success; and I do not know that it can be said to have been repeated, at any rate on anything like the same scale. But it happens, whether as a necessary step in evolution or by chance (whether, that is to say, as the result of one dominant factor in the general situation or of the combined operation of several) that there has been in the last few decades a general tendency towards what may be called a Socratic view of human nature, which bids fair to become a definite and possibly decisive movement. Psychology has begun to throw a wholly new light on the workings of the mind—or (if you prefer it) on the behaviour of the human organism; and, what is more important, our general notion of our place in the scheme of things is clearly altering—principally no doubt owing to the fact that the concept of evolution is at last becoming an integral part of our mental outlook,

and not a mere theorem of biology. We are beginning to consider the creature man dispassionately, with an unbiassed and scientific curiosity; and in doing so we have at any rate certain advantages even over the Greeks. We may not be so intelligent, and we are burdened by a vastly greater mass of custom, tradition, and received ways of thinking and acting but we are at any rate older and wiser; we know a great deal more about nature and we have accumulated a mass of information about the strange ramifications of human history. So that we can now-a-days turn a Socratic eye upon ourselves with less fear of losing our bearings altogether.

I doubt if it has been fully realized how fundamentally our conception of human nature has been and is being altered by recent investigations, but I hope at least to make it clear that such an alteration is taking place, whatever we may think of the result.

The application of scientific method to the analysis of the human mind is an affair of yesterday. Science had previously been concerned wholly with the outside world: such psychology as there was was half metaphysics or ethics, half an artificial construction of imaginary entities like reason, will, memory, emotions, and so on. Our knowledge of the mechanism of the senses and the physiology of the nervous system is considerable: though much remains mysterious in the processes of seeing, hearing, and perception generally, at any rate we know the sort of things they are likely to turn out to be. But till lately the human agent as a willing, feeling, purposive entity, has been, so to say, taken for granted; we have not, that is, investigated ourselves, the human animal, as such, with the same enlightened curiosity and on the same principles that we have applied to our environment.

The school of American psychologists known as the 'behaviourists' have been doing this in one way and the psychoanalysts in quite another. The behaviourists' method has been to observe and record the *modus operandi* of the human animal without any assumptions whatever, and in particular without recourse to introspection. They see if it can be explained purely on mechanical principles, as the result of various combinations of reflex actions, and appear to satisfy themselves that it can, and that consciousness, if it is to be recognized at all, is to be considered more or less as an afterthought. Their method is a useful discipline, but I doubt if it is more. The creature, or rather machine, that they have constructed may possibly move and work, but it is quite evidently not the sort of being one meets in the street or knows oneself to be.

The psychoanalysts on the other hand start with consciousness, and

proceed as it were in the reverse direction. It is to them, and therefore primarily to their master, Freud, that we owe what may fairly be called the discovery of the Unconscious, now rapidly becoming a household word. Whatever else may be said of the Freudian doctrine, it is certainly a remarkable phenomenon, and it has excited such widely divergent feelings that it is important to get it in its proper perspective.

It may be doubted whether any man ever presented a set of really original ideas in so preposterous a form as Freud has done. It seems to have been impossible for him to make any hypothesis intelligible to himself without exaggerating it beyond all reason and dressing it up in the most fantastic and highly-coloured guise. Whatever can be shewn to have happened once or twice becomes at once a universal law; the airiest abstractions are personified in the most precise and concrete

form. The result is a laborious creaking mechanism which is more like one of Mr Heath Robinson's drawings than a scientific theory. There is no need to go into the detail of the theory, especially as it seems to be in a constant state of flux. 'Every schoolboy knows' what the Fore-conscious is, and who prevents our dreams from being even less decent than they are. We have all of us laughed—a little uneasily no doubt, but all the louder for that—at the 'Œdipus complex'. Undoubtedly Freud has made us see that the reproductive instinct plays a considerably larger part not only in our sleeping but in our waking life than we had altogether realized. But it is easy to overdo this sexual business: it is masochism if you rather enjoy it when your mistress takes a thorn out of your finger, and sadism if you bite her ear. In the mercy of Providence we are all built a little that way, and take no great harm from it.

That we need not take Freud's positive statements too seriously may be seen from one example[1]. Among a large number of instances designed to show how the Unconscious is always lurking just behind us and jogs our elbows every now and then, he mentions that on one occasion he wanted to draw 300 kr. from a bank account of 4380 kr. He decided to take out the odd 380 kr., but found when he had made out the cheque that he had put 438 instead of 380. Most of us would have not thought this very remarkable, but to Freud it was a psychological problem demanding careful investigation. ' First I got on the wrong track : I subtracted 300 from 438. . . . Finally an idea occurred to me which shewed me the true connexion. 438 is exactly 10 % of the entire account of 4380 crowns ! ' (My mathematical friends assure me that this calculation is correct : like

[1] Sigmund Freud, *Psychopathology of Everyday Life* (ET 1914), pp. 122-3.

Mark Twain's friend, who knew there was only one mahogany tree in the island of Bermuda, 'they have counted it many times and cannot be mistaken'). Now for the point. Ten per cent. is a royalty; a royalty suggests a publisher; Freud had been thinking at one time of selling books to raise the 300 kr.; *et voilà*! The dark machinations of the Unconscious are revealed. After this one need not be surprised at anything—not even at the famous derivation of agriculture from the Œdipus complex (which I leave the reader to work out for himself).

Nevertheless when one of our leading psychologists recently described Freud as the man 'who has done more for psychology than any student since Aristotle'[1] the statement was not so wildly paradoxical as might be thought. For not only did he bring the concept of the unconscious self once for all

[1] W. McDougall, *Abnormal Psychology* (1926), p. viii.

into the circle of our common ideas, but he made us see it as a living force. For the bundle of bloodless notions fabricated by the classical psychologists or the wire-strung puppet of the behaviourist school, in which nobody really believed, he substituted a breathing, purposive creature—moved no doubt by all manner of strange, primeval or morbid impulses, at the mercy of a legion of unknown and terrifying forces, but indubitably alive.

That the general idea of the Unconscious should at present be rather nebulous and fragmentary is only natural. The term itself is not a fortunate one, though no satisfactory substitute for it has yet been invented. Strictly speaking it means whatever in our mental life is outside our immediate consciousness. It or an equivalent term has been used often enough in the past with various connotations, from Hartmann's metaphysical 'Unconscious', which was a development of Schopenhauer's Will, to Myers'

'subliminal self', which was a sort of organ of telepathy; and of course all modern psychologists have recognized that there is a region below the 'threshold of consciousness' where unnoticed impressions somehow accumulate until they attract our attention. But it was undoubtedly Freud who first turned the conception into a living reality, and made us understand that what goes on in the mind outside the zone of our observation is at least as important as what goes on within it. This outer area is still largely unexplored country, and I will not attempt an enumeration of the various discoveries that one inquirer after another claims to have made in it. The whole mass of material—dreams, hypnotic and neurotic phenomena, the data furnished by introspection and observation, savage beliefs and customs, &c., &c.—will take years of patient sorting out, classification, and definition; for it ranges from the automatic functions

of the body at one end (so far as they can be called mental at all) through the inherited dispositions known as instincts to the complexes and habits peculiar to the individual. What is important at the moment is to recognize that a large portion of our mental life is, as it were, impersonal; that it works and influences us without our being aware of it, and in an ordinary way—that is unless we deliberately apply our minds to it—lies beyond our knowledge and control.

What is seen in that strange form of mental disorder known as 'multiple personality' may be regarded as an extreme example of what is true of all of us. Here from time to time a whole group of ideas and tendencies emerges, as it were, in the wrong place, and takes charge of the entire organism. In one recent case, no less remarkable than that of the famous Sally Beauchamp, and apparently as well authenticated, one of the secondary personalities

satisfied observers that she could invent a story and compel the main personality to dream it. It is of course in dreams that Freud originally demonstrated the working of the unconscious self: when the light is withdrawn the background of our mental life grows visible, and strange shapes, forgotten ancestral memories, primitive impulses, desires, and terrors are dimly discerned flitting in and out of the shadows.

The area present to our consciousness at any time is generally compared to a visual field under strong illumination: the edges of the illuminated portion shade off gradually into darkness. But the simile is not really apt; the light can be directed anywhere at will, and the limits of the whole field at any moment are definitely circumscribed. A better image is that of listening to a piece of complicated orchestral music: unless one has unusual musical gifts, it is only with an effort that one can attend to the inner parts or the voices

of particular instruments—this figure on the violas, those phrases on the oboe, the fragments of the first subject on the 'celli, the special colour of the low notes of the flute, the melody and counter-melody on the first and second violins. And outside all there are the little noises in the concert-room, the rustling of dresses and programmes, a whispered remark, the distant roar in the streets, the sound of a motor-horn, or again the ticking of one's watch and a singing in the ears. To be equally conscious of them all is an impossibility: some can be heard only by the most strained attention, and some not at all.

At first the notion that so much of our inner nature is hidden from us, that we can have wishes and thoughts without knowing it, that all our impulses and emotions have their source in a region to which we have no direct access, offends our inmost feelings of self-respect. We can understand that sense-impressions

may pass unnoticed and afterwards be revived—even that one should, for example, write poems in dreams, and that an artist should be 'inspired'. We are accustomed to talk of being 'overmastered by our feelings', or of controlling our inclinations; but that in a general way a man should think without thinking or will involuntarily seems a contradiction in terms. But this is because we are always drawing distinctions without differences (which indeed is the only way in which the mind can make things intelligible to itself). Consciousness is a question of degree: we are never completely conscious—never completely aware that we are aware—and never completely unconscious. There is nothing in our mental life so utterly buried and remote that it cannot by some means, by dreams, hypnosis, shock, mental disease, be brought to light. On the other hand, when we try to make clear to ourselves what it means to be fully

conscious, the idea eludes us. Of what mental process can we honestly assert that we are fully aware? To say that when one infers a conclusion from the premises one does it consciously is very like a *reductio ad absurdum*. If one is already aware of the conclusion, there is no inference. What one really does is to put the premises fairly and squarely before one, and the conclusion, 'comes into one's head'.

But it is not only that so much of our mental life is unconscious—or rather (for this is the more significant way to express it) that so little of it is entirely conscious; it is still more important to realize that it has a very definitive structure of its own. What lives and moves at the back of our minds is not the mere *débris*, the rejected by-products of our experience; on the contrary, it is an integral part of our lives, a complex being with a character of its own, rich in memories, impulses, and powers; almost another self. That one has to

describe the notion in cloudy metaphors and contradictions in terms is because our vocabulary is inadequate; psychology has not yet assimilated the new conception, and has no words to express it; its terminology still harks back to the idea of the *tabula rasa*, the passive and structureless ego that sat still and mirrored the universe. Whereas our minds are as full of structure, of specific powers, tendencies and dispositions as our bodies.

Instincts

For the majority of people, who are not bothered with their complexes, and for the purposes of practical life, much the most important of these impersonal forces which are ceaselessly working within us are those innate dispositions which come under the general head of instinct. The dominant place taken by instinct in our mental make-up is being recognized more

and more clearly by psychologists; indeed with some it threatens to leave very little room for anything else: but even in 1891 William James could say that 'nothing is commoner than the remark that Man differs from lower creatures by the almost total absence of instincts, and the assumption of their work in him by "reason"'[1]; and though he himself took what we can now see to be the natural view that instincts are more elaborately developed in man than in animals, his enumeration and description of them seem at this date very inadequate. Not indeed that our knowledge of them is at all comprehensive or scientific, or that we have even yet decided what they are and how they are related to each other.

Instincts may be classified for convenience in a dozen different ways—as by their biological ends (e.g. self-preservation), the modes of reaction

[1] *Principles of Psychology* (1891), vol. ii, p. 389.

(e.g. flight), the objects to which they are related (e.g. danger), the emotions they excite or that accompany them (e.g. terror), and so on. Psychologists have spent a good deal of time in discussing the question; but until it is agreed what exactly is meant by the word, and what instincts there are, the problem of arranging them scientifically can hardly be approached.

For our present purpose it is enough to remember that an instinct is something between a purely reflex action, like blinking or starting at a loud noise, and an ordinary habit, like putting on a hat when one goes out. As compared with a simple reflex it consists of a whole group or series of actions—an 'action-pattern', as the modern phrase is—which are purposive in the sense that they are calculated to serve a specific, though unconscious, purpose. As compared with a habit it is innate, not acquired, and is not individual, but common to the race: in effect, instincts may be called

racial habits—without necessarily suggesting that we should adopt Samuel Butler's theory that they are literally the habits acquired by the one continuous individual which is the human species. An instinct is essentially unintelligent, irrational. The classical instance of the way in which it works without consciousness of its purpose is that of the squirrel who will perform all the actions of burying an acorn on a flat table and depart with an air of having done his duty, leaving it entirely uncovered. I do not suggest that human beings behave quite like that; but they go pretty near it sometimes. All instincts (probably) served a biological end: they helped to preserve the individual or the race. The operation of many, if not all, is somehow related to emotion, but how (or, for that matter, what an emotion exactly is) psychologists do not agree. In some cases it seems as if it were only the thwarting of an instinct that

arouses emotion, in others only its free expression.

In civilized humanity most instincts are so overlaid with habit, tradition, and the necessities of social life that they are no longer easily recognizable. Moreover, in our complicated existence half-a-dozen different instincts—instincts, that is, originally evolved separately and for different purposes—may be combined in various permutations and combinations into one or more mental attitudes or 'sentiments.' Until some new Darwin has devoted years to a patient and methodical investigation of the subject, we cannot enumerate and classify or even certainly define the instincts of humanity; but meantime it is at any rate recognized (in theory, though hardly yet in practice) that most human behaviour is to be understood as the expression of innate, inherited tendencies—that we act in this or that way not because we have decided to do so, but because that is

the way in which we are constructed; and the more that is known about the subject the greater, it is safe to say, will be the place that instinct is found to occupy in our mental make-up. There is hardly one of a man's tastes, inclinations, beliefs, desires, impulses that cannot with some assurance be set down as the outcome of his heredity.

As an example of the obscurity of the subject and the uncertainty of our knowledge even of an apparently simple and definite instinct, I will take again that of fear. The psychoanalysts (need one say?) find in fear one of the manifestations of the sexual instinct: all fear is neurotic fear; and that neurotic fear is an expression of suppressed sexual hunger is; it appears, 'surer than all other teachings of psychopathology.'[1] (Hence no doubt the *maisons tolerées*). Mr Bertrand Russell doubts whether

[1] Dr. Ernest Jones, quoted in W. McDougall, *Abnormal Psychology* (1926), p. 181.

fear is instinctive at all: babies appear to be afraid of loud noises and of being dropped, but otherwise preserve their *sang froid*; and it seems as if animals only learned by experience to fear their hereditary enemies.[1] On the other hand Professor W. Köhler, a great authority says:

> Many ghost-forms and spectres, with which no terrible *experience* can be individually connected, are much more uncanny than certain very substantial dangers, which we may easily have encountered in daily life. This particular section of emotional psychology is as yet very obscure. . . . Is it not an admissible hypothesis that certain shapes and outlines of things have in themselves the quality of weirdness and frightfulness?[2]

Certainly we seem all of us to have at the backs of our minds a peculiar terror of the walking dead (for this,

[1] *On Education* (1925), pp. 82, foll.

[2] *The Mentality of Apes* (E.T. 1925), p. 335.

the ambulant corpse in its winding sheet and not any supposed ' spirit ', is what we are really thinking about) : such a feeling, however little we can now understand it, is what Jung would call an ' archetype,' an idea imbedded in our unconscious natures from times beyond all memory or imagination.[1]

Even when the origin and general character of an instinct is known, and its manifestations are patent to every observer, the varied forms it assumes almost defy analysis. Take, for example, the innumerable ramifications of the hunting instinct and the instinct of play which now-a-days make up the vast and complicated system of habits, ideas and morals known as 'sport '. It is because primitive man pursued and killed his prey that the modern journalist writes about the ' Test Matches ' in language that would be a little excessive if applied to the Battle of the Somme. It is due to three

[1] W. F. Otto, *Die Manen*, (1923).

or four profound and aboriginal impulses that the most spectacled of professors walks on air when his son has been chosen to play for his county: no intellectual achievement will ever give the paternal heart precisely that unique, intimate thrill. The sporting instinct is to-day so strongly reinforced by the herd-instinct and by the instinct to which I refer below as that of propriety that the man who does not take a burning interest in cricket, or that peculiar obsession under the influence of which you drive a ball towards a distant hole and turn your toes in, puts himself at once on the same level as 'a pro-Boer', an atheist, or a wearer of celluloid collars.

One of our most deeply-rooted instincts, to the strength and universality of which justice has never been done, is what, for want of a better name, I will call the instinct of propriety. The strange intensity of the feeling of 'being shocked' and the correlative

sense of discomfort at having outraged a sentiment one knows to be respected is something one cannot reason away. The particular standard of propriety may vary indefinitely, but whatever it happens to be at the moment is absolute. A sixteenth of an inch one side or the other of the right line is an enormity. Let anyone cast his mind back over the evolution of the short skirt and consider by what cautious and gradual steps we are at last reaching the point where anyone can see for himself how much more beautiful knees are than ankles. The instinct of propriety 'feels a stain like a wound'. The memory of a *faux pas* will rankle all one's life, and the fear of doing the wrong thing, of violating a *tabu*, will loosen the knees of a hero.

The Herd-instinct

Man is above all things a social animal, and in modern life the master-tendencies that control half our actions and opinions and influence the working of almost every other tendency one can identify, are beyond question those which (since Mr Trotter's ingenious book)[1] we know as the instincts of the herd. On the whole this remains the best title for that hydra-headed sentiment which is consciously or unconsciously affecting us every hour of the day. It suggests its biological origin[2]; and there is a touch of contempt about it which is not wholly out of place. Eventually the instinct will no doubt be definitely analysed into its various factors—the fear of being alone, the

[1] W. Trotter, *Instincts of the Herd in Peace and War* (1916).

[2] Not, however, quite accurately. It has been pointed out by others that 'herd' should strictly have been 'pack.'

desire for warmth, sympathy, defence and attack, imitation, and so on—and the origin of each inferred with some assurance; but for the present, and for present purposes, it may be called collectively the herd-instinct.

The instinct is already active in the nursery; it develops (and is developed) with immense rapidity at school; and it is the guiding principle of life with the vast majority of people, at any rate till middle age. Some of its manifestations are among the noblest and only too many among the meanest of our sentiments. Consider, for example, the multitude as well of virtues as of sins that are covered by the word patriotism. Patriotism is like love: it can rise to the loftiest height of devotion and it can descend to a mean delight in something that is no more than a projection of one's own baser desires; but to discriminate is 'unpatriotic;' the herd encourages all its manifestations alike.

The need of a systematic study of the instincts is more apparent in this case than in any other because of the great variety and widely differing value of its manifestations and the universality of its influence. It is one which has a great advantage over others, in that it is everybody's interest to encourage and stimulate it in everybody else; and it has so many base attractions that the task is an easy one. Some psychologists have invented a thing called the group-mind to account for some of its manifestations. There was no need. The instinct is powerful enough, and for reasons only too intelligible, to explain them all.

One thing any future analysis will certainly bring out, namely, the sharp distinction there is between the spirit of co-operation and the spirit of self-protection (a distinction which in actual life it is no one's interest to make). The sense one had during the Great War of being an integral part of a vast organism

in which each member was working for all was beyond question a very high and noble feeling. Strange as it was to us, and completely and instantaneously as it disappeared—killed, as it were, by the last shot fired on the Western Front—it nevertheless seemed to spring from something deep-seated, something native to us, and it shewed itself not in sudden rushes of emotion but almost as a settled habit of mind, which persisted from year to year, so that one could even hope that a day might come when it would be a part of normal human existence.

But of the herd-instinct as it shews itself in our ordinary life, of the instinct of huddling together into parties, cliques, 'sets,' organisations, movements, snobberies and *snobismes* of every conceivable kind, what can one say but that it is odious and degrading? It excites all our meanest emotions and cloaks them with hypocrisy, the cowardice that is afraid to stand alone,

the vanity that yearns for the privilege of ' belonging to ' something, the inexpressible delight of being warm and safe and able to shew one's teeth at the poor devil who is outside. That it had its uses in the struggle of species is evident enough—solidarity is the essence of the pack ; that it is a key-instinct which requires to be safeguarded with a view to future wars is at any rate arguable ; but that it should be allowed to infect three-quarters of our social life is a little too much. No doubt it is the stock-in-trade of politicians ; but even in the United States, the chosen land of slogans and spell-binders, where (in conventions and places where they bray) it is thought proper to wave banners and cheer for fifteen minutes continuously by way of demonstrating one's freedom, doubts have occasionally been felt whether the entirely irrational movement of large masses of homogeneous ' hicks ' is really the highest development of

humanity; and even our own great apostle of the herd-instinct, even Rudyard Kipling, the Tyrtaeus of collective 'side' and swagger, has conceived a state of society in which making a crowd is a criminal offence (though it is of course only the particular sort of crowd that he happens not to like).[1] 'L'esprit de corps, qui est l'esprit de ceux qui n'en ont pas'—so said Anatole France,[2] once for all, though unfortunately not altogether translateably. Perhaps in the end it all comes back to cowardice, the root of all evil, as courage is the beginning of all virtue; and certainly one of the first fruits of the true self-consciousness and freedom of the future will be a reaction against all that mass of fetish, tabu, and other relics of Aurignacian man, which goes by the name of the herd-instinct. To-day the reaction takes

[1] 'As easy as A B C.' in *A Diversity of Creatures*.
[2] *La Vie en Fleur*.

place only too often in the form of crankiness and the itch to be peculiar; but even the cranks do not really understand what is wrong; they also foregather—herds of Ishmaels conspiring to stagger the bourgeois.

I have been led away a little from the argument, but I may at least make this point:—the fact that so many of the manifestations of the herd-instinct are such that we should repudiate them at once if we were really conscious of them, and that (notoriously) we all do in association or under the crushing incubus of public opinion any number of things that we should blush to do individually or of our own motion, shews very clearly how deeply these tendencies are embedded in our nature and how pervasive is their influence.

Habit

Based on these inherited modes or tendencies we have a vast super-

structure of sentiments, habits, traditions, partly general to the race, partly peculiar to the nation, the class, the individual, in rare cases consciously adopted in the beginning, but generally speaking as unconscious and automatic in their action as the instincts on which they rest. Though human nature is now recognized to be so largely instinctive, it is nevertheless plastic—at any rate till maturity, and probably more so in later life than is generally admitted—and it acquires the ' second nature ' of habit with astonishing rapidity.

Of habit little need be said here. Everyone can see how everyone else is at the mercy of scores of acquired tricks of manner, turns of speech, ways of action, modes of thought—and can sometimes even notice them in himself. In addition, there are all the sentiments, the customs and habits of mind, that come to one as part of one's cultural inheritance : I mean all those

ideas that are thought to be self-evident, because we have never inquired what the evidence for them is, beliefs that are held not because they are true but because they are proper, customs invested with a sacred glamour because of their very irrationality.[1] These largely draw their compelling power from the herd-instinct ; but beside them is another group—what one may call one's personal tradition, the idea that each of us has of what it is proper for him personally to say, do, or think on any particular occasion, given the character he has adopted for himself. Whenever any of us is confronted by a problem that is not entirely practical and admitting only of one answer,

[1] Dr. Schiller's *Problems of Belief* (1924) deals faithfully with the subject; and Mr. J. M. Keynes's pamphlet, *The End of Laissez-faire* (1926), is an elegant analysis of an influential group of half-beliefs : 'to suggest social action to the City of London is like discussing the *Origin of Species* with a Bishop sixty years ago. The first reaction is not intellectual but moral. An orthodoxy is in question, and the more persuasive the arguments the graver the offence.'

his way of approaching it (if he is a conscientious person who sets himself out to do what is known as thinking) is to consider what view is consistent with the others that his ideal self is assumed to hold. Given that I am a Liberal, a master of paradox, a schoolteacher, a patriot, an enlightened person, what am I entitled to assume that I shall say? So he says it. And yet it is quite surprising how cross people become if you say to them: 'but, of course, that is what you *would* think.' I hasten to add that as a rule what I have described is the sensible and natural course to adopt, so long that is (and it is an important qualification) as we know what we are doing. To think out every question that comes along would reduce one to insanity in a month. We have got to carry on somehow, and the proper way to deal with most of the problems one meets is to say, in effect: 'I fancy that if I really thought about it that is

the conclusion to which I should come.'

It is on the same principle that most men, especially if they are not quite sure of themselves, throw themselves into their chosen rôles with such enthusiasm that they adopt the demeanour, facial expression, and gestures which they imagine to be appropriate to them. Partly it is the method of auto-suggestion. If you keep on looking like a barrister it helps you to be one: it is the equivalent of repeating to yourself 'everyday I grow more and more forensic,' or military, or businesslike, or official, as the case may be. One meets these make-ups in the street at every turn. Sometimes it is a person who is taken as the model.

One may often notice the Napoleonic frown on the brow of a business-man, which is his way of telling the world that he considers himself a "Napoleon of finance." One frequently sees

men who make an effort to smile and show their teeth like Theodore Roosevelt. Now these forms of identification are not confined to superficial gestures. They determine the guiding line which one follows through life.[1]

No doubt these are in a sense self-imposed fetters; but they are fetters none the less.

Freedom

So much then by way of indication (for it can be no more) of the extent to which we are governed by impersonal forces, by instinct, by sentiment, by habit. Let us be honest with ourselves and admit that if we subtract from the sum-total of our actions and ideas

[1] E. D. Martin, *Psychology* (1926), p. 203. I quote this largely for the sake of calling attention to a very sensible and up-to-date book, written by a man of the world, which too many psychologists are unfortunately not.

all that is due to influences for which we are not primarily responsible and which we do not deliberately control, there is not much left : the occasions on which we can lay our hands on our hearts and say that we have behaved as free agents, that we have acted, thought, or spoken with a complete consciousness of our motives are at least so long ago that we cannot be quite sure about them. For the most part we behave as automata ; and as automata we shall continue to behave so long as we refuse to recognize the fact. The notion is not altogether pleasing to our vanity. ' What ! ' says the natural man, ' am I then nothing but a collection of habits and traditions, nothing but a fortuitous concurrence of inherited dispositions and reflexes, of blind impulses and tendencies that serve ends of which I am unconscious ? Is the individual nothing but the diagonals of so many parallelograms of forces ? '

Certainly that is the conclusion at which many of our modern psychologists and even philosophers have somewhat hastily arrived. An ingenious German metaphysician, Vaihinger, wrote a massive work, *The Philosophy of 'As If,'* to shew how large and necessary a part fictions of every kind occupy in our system of ideas; and among these fictions is that of the independent self, free and unconditioned: we behave and judge the behaviour of others 'as if' there were such a thing as a responsible ego; but it is only an imaginary quantity. To McDougall the power that synthetizes the whole personality is merely one instinct among others, the 'instinct of self-regard.' William James could see nothing to distinguish a voluntary from an involuntary act but the presence of a memory of the sensations accompanying the movements to be performed. Mr Bertrand Russell adds that 'volition' does not involve 'any specifically new ingredient,' and merely

implies that there is a pause for deliberation when one is presented with the 'kinaesthetic images of incompatible movements'—whereafter we select the one which we judge to be the most likely to relieve the state of discomfort known as 'desire.'[1]

It is true—just so far as it goes. When once it is understood to be true, it is true no longer. Man creates himself by becoming self-conscious. Freedom consists in realizing the extent to which we are governed by forces other than ourselves. We must be behaviourists before we can be idealists. Only when we have analysed ourselves completely do we realize that something unanalysable remains. The truth is (if I may be permitted a slight excursion into philosophy) that the notions of the self and of free-will, which are at bottom the same, necessarily involve a contradiction in terms. If, in order to

[1] *The Analysis of Mind* (1921), pp. 285-6.

arrive at the pure will, you abstract all motive, or to arrive at the pure self you empty it of all content, there remains nothing but a bare notion. For the self, the free agent is not something given beforehand, something to which you ascribe consciousness and to which you apply motives. It is something that comes into being only in the act of self-consciousness and the adoption or rejection of motives. There is no self until it asserts itself.

The idea that the new and growing knowledge of the mechanism of our nature is divesting us of our moral responsibility (a conclusion attractive to the young) is an entire perversion of the truth. The truth is that our responsibility is so much the greater because we 'know better.'

Let us then freely admit, and indeed welcome, the demonstration that human conduct is primarily determined by unconscious forces, and that it is, as things go, a rare occurrence for a

man to be fully aware of the reasons, or rather causes, of his thoughts, desires and actions. However wounding to our vanity, it is evidently of the last importance that we should be under no delusions in such a matter—that we should not think we are behaving freely and rationally (whatever these words exactly mean to us) when in fact we are behaving automatically and irrationally. We shall at any rate be less inclined to attach an exaggerated importance to our actions and opinions. But, in fact, what I may call the new self-consciousness, the insight of to-day, or perhaps rather of to-morrow, into our whole mental structure can hardly fail to cause a radical alteration in our whole outlook.

Self-determination

For in the first place the bare conception of the psycho-physical organism (an elaborately non-committal term for

which no convenient substitute has yet been invented) as something not ourselves, something that is more properly ascribed to our environment, at most the instrument by means of which we live, move, and have our being, in itself implies a wholly different standpoint. It will be said that there is nothing new in the idea : half religion and three-quarters of civilization are based precisely on the idea that we must control our instincts ; if there is any difference in the new point of view it is a difference in words only. In words it may be slight, but in its practical consequences it is enormous. The clear consciousness that our instincts are part of the inherited structure of the organism which it is for us to regulate as we think fit will in fact be another 'Copernican revolution'. The attitude of a man who not only recognizes that his mind contains specific tendencies both innate and acquired, which belong, so to say, to his mechanism and not his self, but also

knows what they are and how they work, will be poles asunder from that of the man who supposes that it is his own personality, his intimate and indefeasible ego, that wants this, rages against that, is filled with this lofty enthusiasm, or that gnawing apprehension—as far from it as from that of the man who thinks he is possessed by devils or inoculated by an all-wise Providence with original sin. Half the power that an instinct has over us lies in our ignorance of its origin and its nature: a feeling suddenly rises and overwhelms us, come from we know not where, filling us with a sense of power and freedom, ten times more potent for being so mysterious. How many of our troubles in life have been due to the ignorance and hypocrisy which in the past have left the young at the mercy of the unexpected and unrecognized stirrings of the sexual instinct? If we could ascribe some of our enthusiasms or indignations,

some of our imperative desires and repulsions to their proper source—much as we ascribe yesterday's nightmare or to-day's divine melancholy to lobster salad—it is at least certain that we should not obey them without further reflexion.

The more we know of our instincts the less power they will have over us, not only because they will not take us unawares, but also—and this is my second point—because it will be common knowledge that the structures of which (presumably) they are the expression were evolved ages ago under conditions wholly different from those in which we live. Whether this or that tendency is adapted to our present environment, or whether education and custom can so modify and 'sublimate' it that it may be allowed free play, is a question which will in days to come be examined in a commonsense scientific spirit as a matter of course.

The biological, evolutionary view of man is supposed to be a commonplace (though I understand that doubts as to its validity have been expressed in the Courts at Drayton, Tenn.) ; but it has not really passed the walls of the schools and become part of the air we breathe. The day is still distant when everyone will be perfectly conscious that a large part of his mental make-up dates from pleistocene times, that his mind is as full of vestigial organs as his body.[1]

Thirdly, the technique of self-control will be entirely different. You will no longer wrestle with the devil—with a sort of subconscious hope at the back of your mind that you will be beaten in the end. To fight an impulse, to try to get an idea out of your mind is exactly how

[1] Bernard Shaw's picture in *The New Methuselah* of the Newly-born discovering her instincts with astonishment and incredulity is a flash of insight—however little one may be attracted by his version of Aristotle's 'theoretic life.'

not to do it. The more you strive to eradicate it, the more deeply you drive it in; and if with infinite pains you thrust it out of sight it rankles, or worse still (as the psychoanalysts have taught us) it becomes, as it were, encysted, buried out of reach of all ordinary consciousness, and secretes a venom that may poison the very springs of life. The simple fact that trying not to think about something is only another way of thinking about it all the more almost deserves the honour of being called a law of the mind, 'the law of reversed effect', as Baudouin, Coué's chief disciple, called it.

So, too, of the control of habit. William James has a famous chapter on habit, much of which is pure gold.

> Could the young but realize how soon they will become mere walking bundles of habits, they would give more heed to their conduct while in the plastic state.[1]

[1] *Op cit.*, vol. i, p. 127.

They do not realize it presumably because they have not been taught. It has been said often enough that the main part of education is the acquisition of useful and exemplary habits, but it is seldom put clearly and consciously in practice. What a child is generally told is, that it is not to get into this or that habit, as if habits in general were things to avoid; which would be sensible enough if the object were to remain plastic as long as possible, but that is the last thing the average parent has in mind. There is certainly something to be said for the view that by acquiring habits we are giving up that versatility which is our greatest biological advantage. James again is to the point (if a little unctuous):

> Be systematically ascetic or heroic in little unnecessary points, do every day or two something for no other reason than that you would rather not do it, so that, when the hour of dire need draws nigh, it may

not find you unnerved and untrained to stand the test.

In other words, cultivate the habit of versatility. But the technique of scientific self-management has yet to be worked out. The Americans are fertile in books on the conduct of the mind, but they seem mostly to be of the quack-medicine or get-rich-quick type. That brave book of MacDougall King called *Nerves and Personal Power* is destined, let us hope, to be the first of a very different series.

Mutability

But what of the great, the fundamental principle that human nature will be human nature still?

> Das alles liege tief in der menschlichen Natur, sei seit Urzeit gewesen und nicht mit einem Schlage zu ändern? Schulgewäsch. In der menschlichen Natur liegt sehr viel,

> und es kommt darauf an, was der Wille daraus entfaltet. (Is it objected that all this lies deeply rooted in human nature, that it has been there from time immemorial, and it is impossible to alter it at one stroke? Pedantic drivel! Many things lie deep in human nature, and it depends on which of these the will chooses to develop.)[1]

So Rathenau, sketching in bold lines his idea of the social order of the future in Germany—Rathenau, who was murdered for some dirty political reason or another, proving once again the unspeakable reality of the herd-instinct. When people talk of the immutability of human nature you may be sure that they are finding excuses for their instincts—excuses for doing nothing, or exploiting labour, or profiteering, or what you will. Occasionally, indeed, it is said purely from cynicism. I recall

[1] Walter Rathenau, *Die neue Gesellschaft* (1919), p. 92. (E. T. 1921, pp. 133-4).

an utterance of a distinguished churchman :

> The expectation of 'a new world after the war' was one of the illusions which had to be dispelled. Human and inhuman nature both remained unchanged, and they are our masters. The chief gain in wisdom has been negative ; certain bladders have been pricked.[1]

In answer to a remark like this, one can only say what Alice Challice said to the barrister in *Buried Alive* : 'I suppose you think that's funny !' If there were any truth in the singular statement that human and inhuman nature are our masters, it would be because people had got into the habit of saying so. No doubt at any given moment human behaviour can be explained as the product of the impersonal forces which, whether by chance or by the first stirrings of the conscious will,

[1] Dean Inge, "Introduction" to *The Coming Renaissance* (1923), p. viii.

have been allowed free play for the time being. But a wider outlook reveals a very different picture. Instead of the monotonous repetition of one predestined type what we see is a succession of kaleidoscopic patterns. The one thing that is permanent in human nature is its infinite variety.

The truth is that we have hardly begun to learn the lessons of the history of evolution—of geology and anthropology. Our preoccupation with the short span of recorded history blinds us to the fact that the civilization we know is a small section of civilization as a whole and but a moment in the long development of the race. Our general outlook, our general idea of ourselves is still based on Archbishop Usher's date for the Creation.

We want a new perspective altogether, the sort of view of history that we should get from a quick-motion film. It was a great revolution when there began to be history at all. Primitive man pre-

sumably had only a very rudimentary notion of time—something like that of small children. What was ahead had hardly any existence, what was behind stretched but a little way into the mist. Evidently speech was necessary for any tradition, and tradition for any sense of antiquity; and how lightly burdened with memories even a highly intelligent race can be, we see from the singular poverty of tradition among the early Greeks. Now-a-days our notion of time—the span we can grasp in imagination (or at any rate on paper)—is as vastly extended as our notion of space. We have no excuse for regarding the few centuries of which we have record as anything but what they are—the end of an immeasurable evolution and the beginning of an evolution that may be more portentous still.

Properly speaking, what we know of human progress, the brief and broken story that we call World-History, so far from being a series of fluctuations round

some central point, or even (less plausibly) a slow progress towards 'some far-off divine event', is to be conceived rather as a bewildering series of mutations of which it may justly be said that the more we know of them the less we understand them. Something has been occurring, but that is about all we can say.

With a wider outlook we shall rid ourselves of the attitude of undiscriminating respect, amounting almost to an inferiority-complex, which it is customary to display towards almost anything that has happened to have happened. There are moments in recorded history, sudden flowerings of a culture or type of mind, which it may well be that we cannot equal at the moment. Certainly this is true of Athens in the fifth century B.C.; true also perhaps of Elizabethan England. But on the whole the real virtue of such history as we know is what Aristotle declared to be the end of

tragedy, namely, to arouse and thereby to purge the emotions of pity and terror.

Control of the Organism

Let us, however, return from these rather airy and general considerations to something a little more tangible. I have said that we shall learn to control our minds as easily as as we control our bodies. (The distinction between mind and body, whatever its theoretical merits, is undeniably convenient). But, as a matter of fact, we do not, except by way of gymnastics, control our bodies much more than we do our minds; that is to say, we do it just enough for practical purposes, but neither consciously nor scientifically; though the argument for deliberate, self-conscious regulation is on the face of it much stronger here, where the origin and nature of the mechanism is so much better known.

Once again the basic consideration from which we must start is that there is no *a priori* reason for supposing that any particular feature or arrangement in our physique, any particular reflex or traditional or habitual 'action pattern' is necessarily the best for our present way of life. Because something or other is 'natural' in any sense of that much-abused word—either because it happens to come easily to us or because we infer that it is what came easily to primitive man—that is no reason whatever for supposing that it is the best possible.

It seems frequently to be assumed without argument that evolution results in producing the best possible organism in a given environment. There is no warrant that I can discover for such a view. Even if it were true that life was, as it were, absolutely plastic and structureless, and flowed into the crevices of its surroundings so as to fill them completely, it would still be open

to argument that other and better kinds of life might fill them equally well. But, in fact, it appears likely that life inevitably crystallizes in certain forms, and that the odds are that these never exactly fit what after all is in itself a variable and shifting mould. Life tends to take symmetrical forms: the environment is unorganized, chaotic. The phrase 'survival of the fittest' really means the survival of the least unfit.

Moreover, it is well-known that our body contains vestigial structures, relics of antiquity that are not only useless now-a-days but may be positively harmful: as often as not the best thing we can do with our appendices and tonsils and such like structures is to remove them. Was it not Helmholtz who said that if the eye had been sent to him by an optician he would have sent it back as defective? And as in structure, so in function (another doubtful but convenient

distinction) our methods may just pass the test of practice, but that does not imply that they might not be indefinitely improved.

Of the possibilities of conscious control over the body I have no space to say much, which is perhaps as well since, in common with the majority of people, I know very little about it. That in abnormal cases (very possibly therefore in normal also, if one had developed the necessary technique) even the spinal or autonomic system and the deeper reflexes can be regulated voluntarily is known. 'In rare cases,' says McDougall, 'a subject can by direct volition modify the rate of the heart-beat; and others seem to be able to affect directly the circulation of the blood in various parts of the body'.[1] Fakirs who can

[1] *Abnormal Psychology* (1926) p. 100. See also, for example, C. Darwin, *The Expression of the Emotions* (edn. of 1892), p. 43 n., for control of the iris. Janet mentions that R. S. Woodworth has collected some remarkable facts.

induce anæsthesia at will have exhibited themselves to admiring audiences from time to time. These accomplishments are not of any apparent utility at present, but they might some day be valuable. What 'auto-suggestion' can do in a small way is common knowledge. The Unconscious (for this, too, is an aspect of our submerged self) is a docile creature enough if you know how to handle it in the right way. The methods of 'faith-healing', often marvellously successful, have been extended by people like M. Coué to the general control of one's mental organization. Mrs Eddy appears to come somewhere between M. Coué and Our Lady of Lourdes in this category. It is all still comparatively unexplored country.[1] In days to come

[1] The whole question of personal hygiene really comes in here, but having received a liberal education I know nothing even of the little that seems to be known about it. On the strength of a ten-years' experiment in vegettarianism some time ago I may be allowed to record my impression that it makes very little

man will no doubt learn to regulate the ordinary operations of the psycho-physical machine pretty effectively without any magic formulæ or incantations, and not only to regulate them but to increase their power at need. In a well-known essay William James points out how little we are conscious of the vast reserves of energy which some sudden crisis or unusual stimulus shews to have been at our disposal, or of the methods by which they can be tapped :

> We need a topography of the limits of human power, similar to the chart which oculists use of the field of human vision. We need also a study of the various types of human being with reference to the different ways in which their energy-

difference : on the whole it perhaps improves one's efficiency slightly ; but there are so many animals about that it would no doubt be uneconomical (which is as much as to say irreligious) not to eat them. Teetotalism I have not yet tried. I dare say it is a good thing.—But these are topics for the serious-minded.

> reserves may be appealed to and set loose. . . . So here is a program of concrete individual psychology. . . . It is replete with interesting facts, and points to practical issues superior in importance to anything we know.[1]

What these energies may be can be guessed from hypnotic and hysterical phenomena. For example, in the case of one of Binet's patients, 'the right arm extended horizontally, with the forearm slightly bent, took an hour and twenty minutes to drop; it was not until the end of this time actually that the elbow, which was slowly falling, came into contact with the body, and so ended the experiment.'[2] This may be tried in one's bath without any serious danger of being late for breakfast.

The case is much the same, doubtless,

[1] "The Energies of Men," in *Memories and Studies* (1911), pp. 263-4.

[2] *Alterations of Personality* (E. T., 1896), p. 111

with our receptive system. It is now generally agreed that the exceptional sensitivities that some savages, such as the bush-trackers in Australia, or dowsers, or thought-readers display, or the phenomena of hypnotic hyperæsthesia and the like, do not imply any special constitution of the nervous organs: it is simply a question of knowing how to use them properly. For that matter, good violin-playing (in many ways the most remarkable of human achievements) probably requires adjustments no less exquisite and accurate.

The incredible achievements of various 'infant prodigies' differ only in degree and not in kind from those of more ordinary minds. It is remarkable, and I think significant, that of the two mathematical prodigies whose methods have been scientifically investigated, Inaudi (who could multiply two five-figure numbers in his head at seven years of age) did his sums by ear,

Diamandi by sight.[1] It has often happened, perhaps more often than not, that as soon as reflexion, logic, the exigencies and distractions of adult life have won the day over spontaneity and 'free association' these singular facilities have been lost. The musical prodigies who remain prodigious are not very numerous. The Unconscious is a sensitive instrument. If you want it to perform delicate feats you must let it go its own way. The moment you try to regulate it without really knowing how it works it halts and goes wrong. In the same way nobody can voluntarily reproduce the swiftness and automatic accuracy of a pure reflex action: indeed there are reflexes that one can inhibit by trying to do them voluntarily. Half the virtue of the technique of the future by which, I am persuaded, vastly greater powers than we at present use will be com-

[1] E. J. Swift, *Psychology* of *the Day's Work*, (1923), pp. 249-50, citing Meumann and Binet.

monly developed will consist in knowing how and when to let the machine run free.

The extent to which, for example, artistic creation may be unconscious is well known. *Kubla Khan* is perhaps the most famous example out of a large number. MacDougall quotes the case of a stockbroker who continually found lines of verse coming into his head while dozing in the early morning, and wrote them down and sold them to magazines.

> Often the lines of a poem would come into his consciousness as complete but detached lines in irregular order; these lines could then be sorted out in the fully-waking condition, and arranged without other change, to make the complete poem.[1]

These are only more striking instances of what is common to all of us; but, as

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 257.

every month or so somebody or other publishes a book to inform the world that the Unconscious contains the whole secret of art, it is just as well to say that in the first place it is necessary to have the unconscious mind of the artist, and in the second that half the artist's work (some would say nine-tenths) consists in giving form and balance to his inspirations. All art is both Dionysian and Apollonian —both the surge of impulse and the cold logic of accomplishment. Many can improvise, but few can also compose; many can compose, but few can also improvise. One can write quite a good criticism of Beethoven in terms of emotion, morals, philosophy—that is to say, matter[1]; but also one equally good in terms of rhythm, balance, volume, tempo, dynamics generally—that is to say form.

[1] As Mr. Turner has done in *Orpheus*—though it is not clear how he would account for the Symphony in A.

But I have digressed again. I do not doubt that in art as in everything else a better understanding and deliberate control of our powers is destined to produce great results. We shall not create geniuses, but we shall render it more possible for them to emerge. It is curious to think how little we exercise our mental powers for their own sakes. Specific processes are practised for specific purposes, and various people profess to train the memory, mostly, I believe, by mechanical systems of association. We play chess and enjoy puzzles—indeed the vogue of the cross-word puzzle shews that it appeals to some general instinct of exercizing the synapses—but on the whole we do not ' have such fun with our minds ' as Charles Lamb said that Coleridge did, or as did Edgar Lee Masters' poor idiot who died before he had completed the high enterprize of memorizing the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. For one thing we should be

at a loss to know how to set about it.[1] Our powers have not been explored, labelled, and classified—the powers, for example, of sustaining attention, of discerning patterns in random arrangements, of counting groups by intuition, of analysing immediately structures such as knots, of inventiveness, and so on. The dim gropings towards a theory of ' general intelligence ' and the tests that have been devised for seeing whether you can write your initials in the left-hand square if Whit Monday falls on Boxing Day but otherwise put the product of nine times seven in the next line but one, are a small beginning.

Efficiency

What is of more practical importance at the moment is that the motions

[1] For the present state of our ignorance, see the Report of the Board of Education Consultative Committee on *Psychological Tests of Educable Capacity* (1924), pp. 67 foll.

which, though largely reflex, instinctive, or habitual, are more immediately under control—ranging from the ordinary movements of life to the highly developed operations of industry—are for the most part left to develop themselves by what is supposed to be nature, and that there is no assurance whatever that we do them in the simplest and most effective way. Indeed, so far as inquiry has gone it seems likely (as might indeed have been expected) that we do nothing of the kind. Mr Matthias Alexander says we neither stand nor breathe nor carry out the simplest movement in the right way: Mr Fletcher tells us that we do not know how to chew our food; and almost everybody else tells us that we do not know what food to chew. We do indeed seem to have an inkling that something is wrong, since most parents tell their small children to 'take deep breaths' in order not to have adenoids (whereupon the small children proceed

to expand their chests and contract their abdomens), and homilies on chewing are part of our earliest moral training (even eating is invested with an unwholesome atmosphere of tabu and authority in most nurseries). These are subjects on which I am profoundly ignorant. But if (as I am content to believe is the case) we perform some of the simplest operations of life—the most natural and unconscious—inefficiently, it is hardly a matter for surprise that many even of the commonest manual operations in industry will not stand a moment's intelligent criticism. That anyone should actually study the way to do things that everyone did every day seems to have come upon the world with a shock of surprise. Some thirty years ago it occurred to an American engineer, Mr F. W. Taylor, to wonder whether the men employed in loading up pig-iron in the Bethlehem steel-works were the best sort of men for the work,

and whether they were doing it in the best way. Strictly speaking, the Americans ought to have made Mr Taylor drink hemlock; but there was money in it. By applying a little commonsense he raised the average amount shifted per man per day from 12½ tons to 47. Hence a revolution, the end of which is still in the remote future.

The idea of 'scientific management,' or at least that part of it which is called 'motion-study,' was not likely to appeal to the true-born Briton. He has got on very well in the past by keeping his eye on the ball, and not worrying too much about theory. Moreover, he is proud of being an amateur, and of proving that, when occasion arises, the amateur can always beat the professional—or at any rate go as near to it as will preserve his self-respect; and it is a view for which there is much to be said. But there are some things which it is really advisable to study:

> The expense of the War, with the demands it brought for strenuous and long-maintained industrial effort by the workers, brought home our national lack of knowledge of the primary laws governing human efficiency.—[1]

—and in 1918 the fact that the subject was really something worth thinking about was solemnly and officially recognized by the institution of the Industrial Fatigue Research Board. The Board naturally inquires into a good many things besides manual operations, but 'motion-study' is not the least part of its work, and without having read all of the three or four dozen monographs that have been published under its auspices one can say with some assurance that the cases in which it has been found that the best (and therefore in the end the easiest) way of performing even the simplest operations has been discovered

[1] *First Annual Report* of the Industrial Fatigue Research Board (1920), p. 4.

and taught are remarkably few. The application of a little commonsense increases output at once, and sometimes to an extraordinary extent. To give only one example, a dozen workers engaged in roughing spoons on a rotating wheel took an average of 126 minutes before instruction and of 89 after it to do 36 spoons.[1] Whether the worker is old and experienced or a complete novice makes no difference—except that the older hand may have some bad habits to overcome:

> These figures [of the output of two novices during training] prove conclusively that a beginner, given adequate training, can become an expert dollier within a few days, but that left to herself, without proper instruction, she probably will never become highly skilled, and will continue all her life to waste her energy on unnecessary and unproductive movements.[2]

[1] E. Farmer, *Motion Study in Metal Polishing* (1921), p. 31. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 26.

And that is what we all do, no doubt: the amount of energy wasted 'on unnecessary and unproductive movements' in all the ordinary operations of life must be colossal, simply because it has never occurred to us to wonder whether we are really so constituted as to do an entirely 'unnatural' thing 'naturally.'

That a study of the best way of tending a machine should have led to the discovery that the designer had generally forgotten that a man had to work and feed it was perhaps only to be expected[1]; but this subject, with the miraculous results that Henry Ford has achieved by asking himself a few simple questions,[2] are beyond my present purpose. The assumption that rule of thumb, experience, and

[1] L. A. Legros and H. C. Weston, *On the Design of Machinery in Relation to the Operator* (1926).

[2] Henry Ford's *My Life and Work* will in future be recognized as one of the most remarkable books that the first quarter of the twentieth century has produced.

tradition may be trusted in the end to produce better results than deliberate reflexion has nothing whatever to justify it ; rule of thumb merely means getting an awkward thing done somehow, experience the acquisition of bad habits and tradition the teaching of them to others.

Self-conscious man

That in the various directions I have indicated — physical, mental, moral, economic—there are bound to be quite new developments in the not very distant future seems to me beyond question. As soon as the idea of the conscious regulation of the psycho-physical machine, as a machine and not as our own darling selves, has got itself well into our heads there cannot fail to be some remarkable changes ; and changes not all for the good, to begin with. The Unconscious is a dangerous toy, before you have really learned how to play with it. We shall see many monsters of vice who choose deliber-

ately to let their instincts run riot; and many lunatics who have unchained forces they cannot control, or have left the house of their soul empty, swept and garnished for seven worse devils to occupy. There was a widow who had been married twice: the first husband had treated her cruelly, the second she had loved deeply. To comfort her loneliness she tried by crystal-gazing and other devices to bring back vivid images of the husband she had loved; but it was the other who persisted in presenting himself, until at last her nerves gave way altogether. The Unconscious is a dangerous toy.

But the most common type of failure will be that of the man or woman who by dint of much half-educated self-reflexion has become 'introverted' (as the psycho-analysts say) into a state of complete 'aboulia' or atrophy of the will, who has dried up all the springs of spontaneous activity and lives in a state of what one might call chronic inhibition. We

shall have them all—amateur Gilles de Retz, pseudo-Nietzches, pinchbeck Hamlets; but these variations will be weeded out as time goes on and the complete type of self-conscious man will gradually assert itself.

It is difficult to imagine the race of the future; but guessing is the object of the *To-day and To-morrow* series, and I will guess. I imagine that to the men of to-morrow, or perhaps it would be safer to say of the day after, what we call human nature will be as plain as a pack of cards. They will know the mental constitution of man better than we know the physical; and with this knowledge and the technique of education and morals that will grow out of it they will produce a race of which we can now have little conception. The old idea of education seems to have been to teach children to grow up like their elders, or rather, like their elders' idea of themselves; though how anyone can look at a child

and hope that it will some day be like himself is one of the darkest mysteries of the human heart. The only use of any generation is to produce a better one ; that at any rate would go a little way towards justifying what Mr Hardy somewhere calls ' the doubtful honour of a brief transit through a sorry world.'

I imagine that the men of the future will say to their children, in effect : ' See here. This is the machine with which you have got to live your life. The steering-gear is a bit erratic, and wants watching. The whole bag of tricks rusts up in no time unless you keep it going. Moreover, she is full of old-fashioned gadgets, some of which are more trouble than they are worth : you will have to cut them out in this way and that. But if you nurse her intelligently her horse-power is tremendous. What you have to learn is when to throttle her down and when to let her rip. Generally speaking she is constructed thus and thus ; but there

are individual differences, and you will be lucky if you have learned the last word about her before you die. At any rate, I will do my best to help you do better with her than I have managed to do with my own.'

Physically, they will be trained with a scientific completeness. They will know exactly how to study and regulate a motion scientifically and turn it into a habit. One cannot, so far as I know, by taking thought add a cubit to one's stature, but one can certainly knock a fifth of a second off one's time for the hundred yards. Our athletic records already have a curious way of being ' broken ' every few years or so, and it is safe to say that they will wear a very poor appearance when the art of controlling a series of movements without interfering with their unconscious spontaneity is thoroughly understood. Nurmi consulting his stop-watch at the end of every lap is really a portent.

Industrially . . . but with the harness-

ing of natural forces on an immensely greater scale, manual industry as we know it will be reduced to a few deft and apparently insignificant movements. On the other hand, there cannot fail to be a great revival of art in the form of handicraft.

Politically . . . but with the complete consciousness and control of the herd-instincts there will be very little that we should recognize as politics. On the other hand, social life will be rich, varied, and free beyond anything we can imagine.

Morally . . . but there ought not to be any morals. When Socrates said that virtue was knowledge he meant that no one who thoroughly understood himself and the world around him could ever be in any real doubt what to do. It sounds a little Utopian to us ; but after all there are a good many things that animals or savages do which we do not need to be told not to do. Our habits improve of themselves—witness the

growth of the feeling of humanity, an entirely unexplained phenomenon. Only a century ago things were done every day of which we can now scarcely bear to read. It is permissible to suppose that in days to come children will learn courage and kindness in their cradles and imbibe the categorical imperative with their mother's milk.

I cannot honestly say that the race I imagine will be the sort of people we should love now-a-days: they will know too well what they are about. We should find them rather cold and hard, rather uncannily canny; we should miss those generous impulses, those enchanting naïvetés which so often charm us in others. In some ways—in simplicity, directness, freedom from ridiculous poses and ridiculous inhibitions—they will be like children; but they will be terribly wise children. Or let us say they will be like Walt Whitman's animals: the wheel will have come full circle; humanity will have completed

its psychoanalysis successfully, will have cleared up its innumerable complexes, and recaptured simplicity in a new form, entirely self-conscious but entirely at ease.

I think I could turn and live with
animals, they are so placid and
self-contain'd,
I stand and look at them long and
long.
They do not sweat and whine about
their condition, . . .

. . . there is no need to quote the immortal passage. But the simplicity will be the fruit of knowledge, not of innocence. We should miss those good souls, those faithful ingenuous creatures whose natural sweetness and piety touch the heart; (though indeed we are drawn to them, I suspect, not altogether from disinterested motives: it is partly because we are not afraid of them, because we know that with them at any rate we shall be safe).

It is certain, however, that there

will be no place in the distant future for many of our favourite virtues and our most romantic feelings. If they are exercized, it will be only in retrospect. If there are any tears, they will be the sort of 'tears, idle tears' that 'rise from the heart and gather to the eyes in looking on the happy autumn fields and thinking' of Europe in the first half of the twentieth century. For it is to be feared that much of what we call history will be regarded by the men of the future as a branch of anthropology over which they will puzzle much as we puzzle over the beliefs and customs of primitive races, over tabu, totemism and magic.

In one of Mr H. G. Wells's Utopias, he expresses through the mouth of his hero a certain perplexity at finding that the emotion of pity seems to be missing from the ideal scheme of things. If I remember, he does not pursue the subject; he merely notes the fact with pained surprise; but it might have

led him to some curious reflexions. What occasion will there be for our heroisms, our compassions, our renunciations, our fortitudes, when living is made so easy? What is the use of having an 'unconquerable soul' if nothing is trying to conquer it? I am tempted by another hackneyed quotation:

> 'For' (he observed) 'if everyone were warm and well-fed, we should lose the satisfaction of admiring the fortitude with which certain conditions of men bear cold and hunger. And if we were no better off than anybody else, what would become of our sense of gratitude: which', said Mr Pecksniff with tears in his eyes, as he shook his fist at a beggar who wanted to get up behind, 'is one of the holiest feelings of our common nature.'

What I may call the Pecksniffian theory of the universe is one we all incline to hold. We prefer to think that, as Bacon says, 'virtue is like precious odours, most fragrant when they are incensed or

crushed'. An easy and effortless perfection does not appeal to us so much as a hard triumph over difficulties and temptations: 'joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons. . . .' However, this seems on reflexion to be wrong; and if virtue is not knowledge, it is at any rate something very like it.

Here then I leave the subject, conscious at least of having illustrated only too aptly in much that I have said the workings of various instincts such as aggressiveness, display (no doubt sexual in origin), and several others whose names I do not know; also such habits as the inversion of sentences and the excessive use of adjectives and parentheses, and the tradition (as it has now become) of sneering at everything which can by any stretch of language be described as Victorian—but hoping that I now 'know better'. A certain scrappiness was, I fear, unavoidable The subject was really one to be dealt with either in a dozen volumes or a

dozen lines. I will try by way of conclusion to deal with it in a dozen lines :

The chief difference between men and animals is that men are potentially self-conscious. Human behaviour is still governed mainly by impersonal forces, by instinct, habit, and tradition ; but the growing realization of this fact, with all the possibilities of deliberate self-development which it implies, will lead in the end to a real freedom based on a real understanding. The whole psycho-physical organism will be regarded as what it is—a mechanism, full of inherited tendencies, peculiarities and defects, but full also of untapped energies, which needs to be consciously adjusted and controlled. The true picture of humanity to-day is that of a giant newly risen from sleep : standing half-awake he stretches his limbs and rubs his eyes, his mind still clouded with half-forgotten dreams ; and, as the mist clears, there open slowly before him the illimitable vistas of the day.

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